

Quick Win 1: Understand your patch

Take time to identify the types of schools that exist in your area. School Games data can be a great starting point but also tap into your local intel. What types of Alternative Provision schools exist in your area? Do any belong to a MAT that may overlap with other SGO areas?

Note that Alternative provision (AP) is education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as school exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, or short- or long-term illness. It includes settings such as pupil referral units (PRUs), although some pupils who are on the roll of a PRU will also attend other forms of alternative provision off-site.

Quick Win 2: Do your research and find your ‘in’

Think about how you may know that is already connected to the Alternative Provision you are seeking to engage.

It may be helpful to reflect on who sits on the school governing board as you may find that you know someone who can connect you to the school. Do any of your mainstream teachers have professional dialogue with their peers in Alternative Provision that you could link in with?

Quick Win 3: Consider your approach

As we enter a further national lockdown, taking the opportunity to engage even more so, with staff from your local Alternative Provision settings by digital means (eg Teams/Zoom) may provide you with the opportunity to get a real grounding/understanding of what is on offer for young people within their school. This may also provide insight around which pupils you can approach, an opportunity to develop pupil voice and create leadership offers once we find ourselves out of lockdown.

One of the best ways some of the Development Coaches have found to engage with an Alternative Provision school in their area has been approaching it with the view of wishing to speak with their pupils to understand their needs, thoughts and feelings when it comes to school sport. Too often the voice of young people in Alternative Provision is not sought, and this provides a unique opportunity to engage through the platform of youth voice. The new School Games resource illustrations and Chateez cards could support you with this.

Quick Win 4: Virtual Delivery

Consider how we can use ‘lockdown silver linings’. How can our new virtual delivery School Games world engage with young people in Alternative Provision as a first introduction to the School Games. This may be a great introduction that eliminates the barriers of pupils coming off site, engaging with peers from mainstream initially, and finding an activity that is right for them.

Quick Win 5: Spend time in Alternative Provision settings

If it is the fear factor of the unknown that may have prevented you from engaging with Alternative Provision to this point, why not ask to visit a school when it is safe and appropriate to do so, and spend time seeing what they are about. What are their drivers? Who are the young people that attend? How is school sport and PE delivered? Whilst no known data exists on this, anecdotally there are high proportions of SLT in Alternative Provision that are from a PE trained background.